

THE SCHOOL -- THE BASIS FOR A DEMOCRATIC COMMUNITY

Today most people agree that individuals are influenced, one way or another, by the kind of life lived during childhood. They agree that the experiences of childhood influence the directions in which the individual grows.

Psychologists, who become more thoroughly interested in this fact, go much further. They have traced the development of hundreds of thousands of individuals and found adult habits, attitudes and personality generally, directly related to specific circumstances and happenings during childhood. Experiences that because of their relationships to other experiences and that make sharp, pleasant or unpleasant impressions, are frequently found to be responsible for specific values, attitudes, habits, and interests found quite late in life.

In more mature years we become aware of the significance of more and more of what we see, hear, or read about. When we are grown we don't stop learning, usually, but what we find most easy to accept are usually things that are quite in agreement with habits, attitudes and interests acquired much earlier in life. It is more difficult, generally, for a grown person to change a habit or attitude than for a youth to acquire a habit or attitude.

In Bloomfield, and in other communities over the country, more and more attention is being given to the broader problems of life. All over the country, groups are becoming more interested in the economic, political and social developments in every corner

of the world. More than ever before, we see our own interests more closely related to and more clearly in terms of the interests of the various peoples of the earth. Our ability to live as an isolated community anymore is decreasing almost daily. There is a growing interdependence between the peoples of the world. Communication and transportation have brought people into closer relationships. No longer can we sit back and ignore what is happening in Germany, China, India, Java, Africa, or in Bloomfield.

We know that today the United States is in an unprecedented position of leadership. World War II thrust new leadership upon us, and whether we like it or not, with this leadership has come responsibility, and new recognition of how our own welfare is tied up directly with that of peoples speaking other languages, of different cultural backgrounds, believing in different economic, political and social systems. Yet, we must find a way, carefully, to find peaceful relationship and interrelationships with all the people of the world.

Our present foreign policy seems unquestionably to promote the development of systems similar to our own. Immediately after the recent War our funds going abroad in many instances were used for just such promotion. The attempt to influence other people favorably expressed itself even through the medium of relief supplies to the needy in other countries. I was told by a worker in Czechoslovakia that, frequently, articles, even medicine, carried the label, "donated by the United States of America".

The financial power and industrial production of the United States is unsurpassed. There is little doubt of this. Yet, the

people of the world, and many of us right here at home, ask with increasing seriousness, "at what price?" Is such power and production worth the price of exclusion of almost entire races, creeds and colors from most of the important areas of the economic, political and social structures that made that power and production possible? Certainly, the exclusion of people simply because of their race, creed, color or national origin, is no recommendation of our "democratic way of life" to the peoples of the world; nor does it make for good, healthy habits and interests in our own children or adults.

Until we eliminate exclusions, we are failing to protect our way of life here. We are showing that we are incapable of leadership, of democratic living and growing right here at home.

It is important for every community to reflect the democracy we all want so very much. Tonight we are concerned with one of the three most important institutions of any community -- the school. The school is one of the most strategic mirrors of the amount of democracy there is in any community. The school--where the learning refined from the knowledge of the ages is taught; knowledge that is the result of the work and thought of men of all races, colors and creeds. The school is the open door through which this vast amount of learning flows. Our free public schools for all the people, is a deeply ingrained institution in our country. Our founding fathers saw the need for equal opportunity for all the people, and our later forebears saw this in terms of education. Today, no one questions public school education as being a definite responsibility of a community.

Are these democratic ideals? Is this the way children should grow-up? Everyone here will say, "No," of course; and add, perhaps that, "We have excellent schools around here." But, as we think of the seriousness of many problems that we are all working on today, that school officials, teachers and parents alike, are working on, can we truly say that our schools are excellent/. And, are we ready to see that the right ideals, values and goals are presented to our children? Are we ready to see that our children - the future of Bloomfield, of America - have the sort of school that demonstrates democracy? This is what we want to discuss tonight, in order to insure good citizen relationships, in our lifetime, for the future of our children, the future of Bloomfield, the future of the nation!

$\frac{1}{3}$ of learning by 18 months;
 $\frac{1}{2}$ by 405 -

(60)

Meaning, or otherwise comment
definition of learning
If that were true why have elementary
and high schools, both member
colleges & universities.

Shift responsibility to the home!